



Public Health Officials and Local Healthcare Providers Call to Action

While no measles cases have been identified in North Dakota, outbreaks are occurring in Minnesota and Ohio. Since November 2022, 74 measles cases have been identified in central Ohio, including 26 children who required hospital care (hospitalization rate ranging from 35-40%). Of the 74 cases, 69 children were unvaccinated, 4 were partially vaccinated, meaning they had received only 1 dose of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. Two children had an unknown vaccination status. Also impacted were 17 children under the age of 1, who, due to their age, were not yet eligible for the vaccine.

As public health and healthcare providers in the community, we encourage parents and guardians to make sure their children are up-to-date with measles vaccine. Holiday gatherings and get-togethers are right around the corner and the time to act is now.

It is recommended all children receive 2 doses of the MMR vaccine, the first at ages 12-15 months and the second at 4-6 years, to be fully protected against measles. While one dose of MMR has 93% efficacy at preventing measles infections, 2 doses are 97% effective.

In Cass County, there is nearly a 94% MMR vaccination rate for children kindergarten age and older. However, the vaccination rate for children ages 19-35 months is only 83%. A population or community needs 95% immunization coverage to prevent a measles outbreak. In recent years, there has been a nationwide drop in vaccination rates among children. This has led to several outbreaks, which are largely preventable.

This community letter is signed by:

- Dr. Paul Carson, Director of the NDSU Center for Immunization Research and Education
- Patrick Gulbranson, Chief Executive Officer, Family HealthCare
- Dr. Avish Nagpal, Medical Director, Infection Prevention, Sanford Health Fargo
- Brenton Nesemeier, Field Epidemiologist, North Dakota Health & Human Services
- Dr. Tracie Newman, Health Officer, Fargo Cass Public Health
- Dr. Richard Vetter, Chief Medical Officer, Essentia Health